

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

JOHN RANDALL FUTCH,	:	
	:	
Plaintiff,	:	Civil No. 08-3469 (RMB)
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
J. MCKINNON, et al.,	:	MEMORANDUM AND ORDER
	:	
Defendants.	:	
	:	

Plaintiff John Randall Futch, a prisoner confined at the Federal Correctional Institution at Fort Dix, New Jersey, seeks to bring a civil action challenging the decision of his Unit Manager to return him to the general prison population. Plaintiff alleges that he is in fear of his life, but he states no facts explaining the basis for that fear. Plaintiff has neither prepaid the filing fee nor submitted an application for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*.

The Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995, Pub. L. No. 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321 (April 26, 1996) (the "Act"), which amends 28 U.S.C. § 1915, establishes certain financial requirements for prisoners who are attempting to bring a civil action or file an

appeal in forma pauperis.¹ Under the Act, a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis must submit an affidavit, including a statement of all assets, which states that the prisoner is unable to pay the fee. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1). The prisoner also must submit a certified copy of his inmate trust fund account statement for the 6-month period immediately preceding the filing of his complaint. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(2). The prisoner must obtain this statement from the appropriate official of each prison at which he was or is confined. Id.

Even if the prisoner is granted in forma pauperis status, the prisoner must pay the full amount of the \$350 filing fee. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). In each month that the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10.00, until the \$350.00 filing fee is paid, the agency having custody of the prisoner shall assess, deduct from the prisoner's account, and forward to the Clerk of the Court payment equal to 20% of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2).

Plaintiff may not have known when he submitted his complaint that he must pay the filing fee, and that even if the full filing fee, or any part of it, has been paid, the Court must dismiss the case if it finds that the action is: (1) frivolous or malicious; (2) fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or

¹ Suits brought in forma pauperis are governed by 28 U.S.C. § 1915.

(3) seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). If the Court dismisses the case for any of these reasons, the Act does not permit the prisoner to get his filing fee back.

If the prisoner has, on three or more prior occasions while incarcerated, brought an action or appeal in a court that was dismissed on any of the grounds listed above, he cannot bring another action in forma pauperis unless he is in imminent danger of serious physical injury. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

As noted above, in this case, Plaintiff failed to prepay the filing fee or to submit an application for leave to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1), (2). While incarcerated, Plaintiff has had several cases dismissed as frivolous or for failure to state a claim, including: Futch v. Drug Enforcement Agency, Civil Action No. 07-0057 (S.D. Ga.); Futch v. Wheeler, Civil Action No. 07-1163 (C.D. Ill.); Futch v. Drug Enforcement Administration, Civil Action No. 06-0238 (S.D. Ga.); Futch v. Finnerty, Civil Action No. 05-2529 (D. S.C.); Futch v. Davis, Civil Action No. 05-2589 (D. S.C.). Accordingly, Plaintiff may not now proceed in forma pauperis unless he alleges facts demonstrating that he is in "imminent danger of serious physical injury." The conclusory allegation in the Complaint that Plaintiff is "in fear of his life from other inmates" is not sufficient to demonstrate such imminent danger.

In addition, the conclusory allegation that Plaintiff is "in fear of his life from other inmates" is not sufficient to state a claim under the Eighth Amendment for failure to protect.

Under the Eighth Amendment, prison officials have a duty to provide humane conditions of confinement, including adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and personal safety.

Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 832 (1994); Young v. Quinlan, 960 F.2d 351, 364 (3d Cir. 1992). Accordingly, prison officials must take reasonable measures "to protect prisoners from violence at the hands of other prisoners." Farmer, 511 U.S. at 833 (1994) (internal quotations omitted). "Being violently assaulted in prison is simply 'not part of the penalty that criminal offenders pay for their offenses against society.'" Id. at 834 (quoting Rhodes v. Chapman, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981)).

To successfully state a claim for violation of the Eighth Amendment, an inmate must satisfy both the objective and subjective components of such a claim. The inmate must allege a deprivation which was "sufficiently serious," and that in their actions or omissions, prison officials exhibited "deliberate indifference" to the inmate's health or safety. See Farmer, 511 U.S. at 834; Wilson v. Seiter, 501 U.S. 294, 305 (1991); Nami v. Fauver, 82 F.3d 63, 67 (3d Cir. 1996).

In the context of a failure-to-protect claim, the inmate must show that he is "incarcerated under conditions posing a

substantial risk of harm," Farmer, 511 U.S. at 833, and that prison officials knew of and disregarded the excessive risk to inmate safety, Id. at 837. "A pervasive risk of harm may not ordinarily be shown by pointing to a single incident or isolated incidents, but it may be established by much less than proof of a reign of violence and terror." Riley v. Jeffes, 777 F.2d 143, 147 (3d Cir. 1985). "Whether ... prison official[s] had the requisite knowledge of a substantial risk is a question of fact subject to demonstration in the usual ways, including inference from circumstantial evidence, and a fact finder may conclude that ... prison official[s] knew of a substantial risk from the very fact that the risk was obvious." Farmer, 511 U.S. at 842. Deliberate indifference is more than a mere lack of ordinary due care, however; it is a state of mind equivalent to a reckless disregard of a known risk of harm. Farmer, 511 U.S. at 834.

Plaintiff does not allege facts which suggest that defendants were informed of a specific risk of harm to himself or other inmates, Nami, 82 F.3d at 67-68; Young, 960 F.2d at 362, or that "a substantial risk of inmate attacks was longstanding, pervasive, well-documented" or otherwise obvious to them. Farmer, 511 U.S. at 842; accord Hamilton v. Leavy, 117 F.3d 742, 747-48 (3d Cir. 1997); Ingalls v. Florio, 968 F.Supp. 193, 199-200 (D.N.J. 1997). Negligence is insufficient to establish a violation of the Eighth Amendment. Davidson v. Cannon, 474 U.S.

344, 345-48 (1986) (finding that prison officials' negligent failure to heed prisoner's notification of threats from another inmate, followed by an assault, is not a deprivation of constitutional rights); see also Schwartz v. County of Montgomery, 843 F.Supp. 962 (E.D. Pa.), aff'd, 37 F.3d 1488 (3d Cir. 1994) (stating that corrections officers' failure to observe institutional policies regarding the supervision of dangerous inmates constitutes negligence, which cannot support a § 1983 action for violation of the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendments).

Plaintiff's statement of indifferentiated fear, unsupported by any factual allegations, is insufficient to state an Eighth Amendment claim.

THEREFORE, it is on this 23rd day of July 2008;
ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall supply to Plaintiff a blank form Application to Proceed In Forma Pauperis and a blank form Complaint for use by a prisoner; and it is further

ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall administratively terminate this case, without filing the complaint or assessing a filing fee; Plaintiff is informed that administrative termination is not a "dismissal" for purposes of the statute of limitations, and that if the case is reopened, it is not subject to the statute of limitations time bar if it was originally filed timely, see Houston v. Lack, 487 U.S. 266 (1988) (prisoner mailbox

rule); McDowell v. Delaware State Police, 88 F.3d 188, 191 (3d Cir. 1996); see also Williams-Guice v. Board of Education, 45 F.3d 161, 163 (7th Cir. 1995); and it is further

ORDERED that if Plaintiff wishes to reopen this case, he shall so notify the Court, in writing addressed to the Clerk of the Court, Mitchell H. Cohen Building and U.S. Courthouse, Fourth and Cooper Streets, Camden, New Jersey, 08101, within 30 days of the date of entry of this Order; Plaintiff's writing shall include either (1) a complete in forma pauperis application, including an affidavit of indigence and six-month prison account statement, and including an affidavit alleging facts sufficient to establish that Plaintiff is in imminent danger of serious physical injury, or (2) the \$350 filing fee; and it is further

ORDERED that such writing shall also include a proposed amended complaint; and it is further

ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall serve a copy of this Order upon Plaintiff by regular U.S. mail.

s/Renée Marie Bumb
Renée Marie Bumb
United States District Judge